



UNITED STATES
OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
WASHINGTON, DC 20415-1000

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

May 6, 2004

MEMORANDUM FOR HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

FROM: KAY COLES JAMES
Director

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kay Coles James", is placed to the right of the "FROM:" line.

SUBJECT: The 45-Day Hiring Model

In order to address the President's concerns for effective human capital management and succession planning, the Office of Personnel Management has implemented a comprehensive set of initiatives over the past several years to make the Federal Government more competitive in the race to hire talent. Two years ago, the President supported the passage of the Chief Human Capital Officer Act of 2002, which included authorities agencies had long sought in this area. In 2003, through an e-government initiative, OPM completed the modernization of the government's main job announcement information systems to match them with the best in the private sector. OPM's Human Capital Management staff has worked continuously with your staff to assure that all the tools at your agency's disposal are being used to get talent in the door.

Despite these accomplishments, I continue to see statistical and anecdotal evidence that our hiring process is slow, cumbersome and non-responsive. As a team, we must redouble our efforts to deploy the flexibilities we were given even as we eliminate outmoded agency rules and practices that interfere with our ability to bring top candidates on board quickly. Today, I am asking that you direct your HR teams to begin the implementation of a 45-day model for Federal hiring.

This 45-Day Hiring Model (attached) is similar to the proven and effective 30-day model OPM pioneered for SES hiring. The model covers that portion of the hiring process that is most visible to applicants – when they look to us most for results. It covers the time from the close of a vacancy announcement to when an offer is made. I believe that this model will be achievable for all hires. Applied in conjunction with workforce planning goals and leadership commitment, it will take the Federal Government to a new level of hiring effectiveness. At OPM, we have already adopted the model and are utilizing it to drive results in our time to hire.

Making hiring processes and decision-making lean, fast and effective is the single most important thing we can do to honor the President's charge to make the Federal Government competitive for the best talent America has to offer. Over the past several months, OPM, partnering with many of you, has attracted over 53,000 potential applicants to Federal recruitment fairs around the country. The talent is out there and people are interested. We need to do a better job of bringing them in the door. OPM has provided new hiring flexibilities, hands-on assistance, and policy guidance, and we will fully support the team as your staff drives

results within your agency. Ultimately, your personal support and the involvement of your immediate staff are what will make the difference. OPM has found that results improve when agencies:

- energize the entire leadership to focus on making all steps in the hiring process flexible, fast and results-oriented.
- assure Human Resources organizations have the skill and the tools necessary to operate an effective hiring process.
- strengthen measurement and monitoring of the time it takes to hire so we can assure the President that we compare favorably to the highest standards in the private economy.

I have directed my Deputy Associate Directors for Human Capital Management to meet with your Chief Human Capital Officers personally to discuss the new model and how it will be implemented in your agency. Beginning in the fourth quarter of FY 04, OPM will begin scoring agency progress on implementing the model as part of the Human Capital initiative in the President's Management Agenda. To be scored "Yellow," an agency must have a regular, auditable system for collecting and analyzing data on the stages of the hiring process. "Green" will require significant and ongoing progress toward the goal of 45 days – or better – for all hires at all levels.

I assure you once again that improving Federal hiring remains our number one priority. Forty-five days is a reasonable goal. When we can demonstrate that we are meeting it, we will have delivered on an important commitment to the American people and implemented a long overdue change to the status quo.

Please do not hesitate to contact Marta Brito Pérez, OPM's Associate Director, Human Capital Leadership and Merit System Accountability, for additional guidance or to address any concerns. You can reach Ms. Pérez at (202)606-1575 or by email at marta.perez@opm.gov

cc: Chief Human Capital Officers
Human Resources Directors

Attachment

45-DAY HIRING MODEL¹

Screening and Selection Process		Recommended Guidelines	
Action	Owner	# of Days ²	
Screen Applicants for Minimum Qualifications/Selective Factors	HR	1-5	5 ³
Rate Applicants	HR	1-5	10
Apply Veterans' Preference/Rank Applicants/Deliver Certificate(s)	HR	1-5	15
Review Applications	Selecting Official	1-5	20
Schedule and Conduct Interviews	Selecting Official	1-15	35
Check References	Selecting Official	1-5	40
Make Selection(s) and Return Certificate(s)	Selecting Official	2	42
Extend Job Offer(s)	HR	1-3	45
¹ 45 work days from closing date of vacancy announcement ² Agencies may adopt internal strategies to further reduce hiring time ³ An automated assessment system may shorten this step			